

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PBOR, PN
SUBJ: TORRIJOS INAUGURATES NEW IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

REF: PANAMA 6163

1. PANAMANIAN CHIEF OF GOVERNMENT GEN. TORRIJOS PRESIDED AUG 24 AT A PUBLIC CEREMONY IN THE LEGISLATIVE PALACE TO INAUGURATE THE NEWLY-FORMED GOP COMMITTEE (REFTEL) FOR TREATY IMPLEMENTATION. TORRIJOS, WHOSE SPEECHES ARE SOMETIMES A LITTLE ERRATIC, WAS CONVENTIONALLY INSPIRATIONAL. NOW, HE NOTED, PANAMA HAD ENTERED PERHAPS THE MOST DIFFICULT PERIOD OF THE EFFORT TO CONSOLIDATE ITS SOVEREIGNTY -- THE DOMESTIC PERIOD. PANAMANIANS MUST DEMONSTRATE TO THE WORLD THAT THEIR COUNTRY WAS SUFFICIENTLY RESPONSIBLE AND CAPABLE OF OPERATING THE CANAL. THE PERIOD OF NEGOTIATIONS AND RATIFICATION WAS BEHIND, AND IN THE EFFORT AHEAD NO PATRIOTIC PANAMANIAN COULD AFFORD TO STAND ASIDE. IN CONCLUSION, HE ORATED, WE MUST BE ABLE TO SAY TO THE WORLD THAT WE HAVE THE TECHNICAL, HUMAN, AND PATRIOTIC CAPACITY TO OPERATE THE CANAL "BETTER" THAN CURRENTLY.

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2. COMMENT: THE IMMENSE LIST OF "ADVISERS" TO THE NEW COMMISSION IS CLEARLY INTENDED FOR PUBLICITY AND TO INVOLVE AS MANY DISTINGUISHED PERSONS AS POSSIBLE IN THE TREATY EFFORT, TO FORESTALL CRITICISM. THUS, THE NAMES OF SEVEN MEMBERS OF THE ANTI-TREATY, ANTI-TORRIJOS INDEPENDENT LAWYERS MOVEMENT (MAI) WERE INCLUDED, INCLUDING MAI LEADER CARLOS IVAN ZUNIGA. THEY HAVE

ALREADY, IN A LETTER PRINTED IN "MATUTINO" OF AUG 25,
REJECTED ANY SUCH ROLE.

3. WE ALSO LEARNED FROM PAN CANAL SOURCES THAT
SEVERAL PAN CANAL EMPLOYEES, PANAMANIAN CITIZENS, ARE ON
THE LIST OF GOP ADVISERS. WHILE PAN CANAL FORESEES THE
POSSIBILITY OF SOME CONFLICT OF INTEREST PROBLEMS ARISING,
DEPENDING ON THE DEGREE OF INVOLVEMENT OF THESE EMPLOYEES,
IT IS ALSO AWARE OF THE IMPRACTICABILITY OF TRYING TO
PRECLUDE THOSE EMPLOYEES FROM ADVISING THEIR OWN GOVERN-
MENT ON MATTERS WITHIN THEIR AREA OF EXPERTISE CONCERNING
THE CANAL ENTERPRISE. AS AN INITIAL REACTION TO THE
SITUATION, PAN CANAL HAS TENTATIVELY DECIDED THAT ANY
ADVISORY ACTIVITY BY THE EMPLOYEES IN QUESTION WILL HAVE
TO BE CONDUCTED ON THEIR OWN TIME AFTER DUTY HOURS, OR
ON A REGULAR LEAVE BASIS IF DURING DUTY HOURS AND THE
EMPLOYEE CAN BE SPARED. PAN CANAL WOULD CLEARLY OBJECT,
HOWEVER, TO ANYTHING MORE THAN AN ADVISORY ROLE, SUCH AS
PARTICIPATION BY PANAMANIAN EMPLOYEES IN BINATIONAL
WORKING GROUP OR JOINT WORKING SUBCOMMITTEE AFFAIRS ON
BEHALF OF THE GOP. DIKEOS

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